

IN THE ABSTRACT:

Please cancel the current abstract and insert the following.

~~Openings for transmitting ultraviolet rays are formed in a reticle stage (7) and a reticle surface plate (10) for supporting the reticle stage. A chuck groove (15) is formed in a reticle chuck surface (14) of a reticle holder (13). An opening for transmitting ultraviolet rays is also formed in the holder (13). An enclosure (17) for surrounding the ultraviolet path from the lower end of the stage (7) toward the vicinity of the reticle surface plate (10) is attached to the opening of the reticle stage (7). A supply port (16) for supplying purge gas made of inert gas into a space defined by a reticle (6), the stage (7), the enclosure (17), the surface plate (10), and a projection optical system (19) is formed.~~

-- An exposure apparatus includes a reticle stage which holds a reticle, a projection optical system which projects a pattern of the reticle onto a substrate, a reticle surface plate which is a base plate disposed between the reticle and the projection optical system and which supports the reticle stage. The reticle surface plate has an opening for transmitting exposure light. The exposure apparatus further includes a sheet glass set on the reticle surface plate so as to separate a space inside the opening of the reticle surface plate from a space above the reticle surface plate. --